



# STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
301 CENTENNIAL MALL SOUTH • PO BOX 94987 • LINCOLN, NE  
68509

## State Rehabilitation Council Meeting

Nebraska State Capitol

Lincoln, NE

October 9, 2018

## Meeting Minutes

*Public notice of upcoming meetings will be available on the Department of Education website under "Master Calendar" at least 5 days prior to each meeting.*

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Lonnie Berger, Jerry Bryan, Lindy Foley, Christine Gaspari, Gayle Hahn, Susan Madsen, Tobias Orr, David Scott, Alice Senseney, JD Simmons, Carly Weyers

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Crystal Booker, Michael Bursaw, Lisa Kent, John McNally, Jonathan Moeller, Vicki Newman, Diane Owen-Downs, Sandy Peterson, Adriana Springer, Cassidy Wall, Camie West

**VR STAFF PRESENT:** Angela Fujan, Brigid Griffin, Ashley Hernandez, Mary Matusiak, Victoria Rasmussen, Paige Rose

**INTERPRETERS:** Margie Propp, Ben Sparks

*The meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) commenced at 10:02 a.m. public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education web site.*

### **SRC NEW MEMBERS**

David Scott welcomed new members, Lonnie Berger and Susan Madsen. Council members introduced themselves.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

No public comment was given.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

JD Simmons moved and Mary Matusiak seconded the motion to approve the agenda as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

### **APPROVAL OF AUGUST 14, 2018 MINUTES**

Mary Matusiak moved and Tobias Orr seconded a motion to approve the August 14, 2018 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

## **FOLLOW UP OF LAST MEETINGS ACTION ITEMS**

### **Senator Outreach February 12, 2019**

David Scott summarized the annual senator outreach event which is being planned for February 12, 2018. David shared talking points will be provided to council members to share VR facts and information. Lindy Foley stated VR staff will be available but SRC will be leading the event. The awards will be held in State Capitol room 1510 from 8:00-9:30.

### **Employment & Inclusion Awards**

Mary Matusiak summarized the Disability Employment and Inclusion Awards that will be occurring after today's meeting at 1:00pm. Mary described the four award categories being awarded. The Entrepreneur Award will be awarded to Toby Mickelson of Old West Radon. Dr. John J. Curran was selected as the recipient of the Individual Champion Award. The Small Business Recognition Award is going to be received by Columbus Care and Rehabilitation Center, LLC. West Pharmaceutical Services, Inc is the recipient of the Large Business Recognition Award. Mary reviewed the selected awardees and summarized their accomplishments. Mary shared that Lieutenant Governor, Mike Foley, will be speaking at the awards and shared that Commissioner Blomstedt is ill and Brian Halstead will be presenting as his substitute.

### **SRC Annual Report**

Angela Fujan shared a reminder that the subcommittee chairs and last year's council chair will need to submit their year-end summary reports to Sandy Hamm.

## **MEMBER FEEDBACK ON VR**

David Scott asked council members if any feedback was brought to council members. No member feedback was shared.

## **CAP REPORT**

Jerry Bryan provided members with a written report outlining CAP cases from the past quarter. Jerry reviewed with the council what the Client Assistance Program is and how it serves VR clients. Jerry summarized and discussed the three cases in the report. Jerry shared the first complaint occurred from an individual who was not pleased with VR services. Jerry reported the client was changed offices which was initially successful but due to the client's aggressive behaviors his case was closed for office safety. Jerry reported the client was understanding of the situation and was given referrals to additional community services. David Scott asked how VR staff is prepared to deal with potentially unsafe client interactions. Lindy Foley shared VR staff is provided a variety of trainings to assist them in working with upset individuals including de-escalation trainings and safety trainings. Jerry summarized the second case in which the client felt VR staff was taking too long to provide service. Jerry shared there was miscommunication in appointment cancellations and staff turnover created a delay in transferring of client cases. All issues were resolved in the client's favor. Jerry summarized the final case in which the client complained VR provided incorrect information to the client's employer which prevented him from advancing. Jerry shared the issue occurred from a miscommunication in an email wording which was clarified.

Vicki Rasmussen shared with the council there is VR handbook chapter on Violent & Disruptive Behavior which is provided to all VR staff and outlines how staff should handle those potential situations. Chris Gaspari asked if a client who has acted in a threatening matter if they could later receive services or if they are deemed unable to receive any further services with VR. Jerry Bryan shared the case would be handle on a case by case basis and verify if any steps such as anger management or behavior services have occurred to see if services could assume safely and appropriately. Angela Fujan discussed how these behaviors in some situations could be disability related and they will work to find strategies when needed.

## **MEMBER FEEDBACK ON WRITTEN REPORTS**

Members were provided with written reports from ATP, NYLC, and CAP. David Scott discussed the NYLC budget written report that he would be interested in seeing a comparison of used funds versus the proposed funds. Lindy Foley stated we could look into having representatives from the written reports attend meetings and discuss their reports at selected meetings to be available for further discussion.

Tobias Orr summarized what Assistive Technology Partnership is and how they serve the state of Nebraska. Tobias summarized the content of ATP's written report including AT4ALL which is a technology reuse program. Enrichment Foundation Grant (EFG) & Part B Independent Living Funds which work to provide home living modifications. Tobias discussed their resource coordinators role and their work finding needed funding were described. Tobias explained that with DHHS they work on home and vehicle modifications for the age and disabled population which are not covered by Medicare. Tobias discussed education specialists and their work consulting with schools and their students. Tobias shared they provide approximate 700-1000 technology trial loans to schools each year. David Scott asked how special education departments and school districts are kept up to date with technology use. Tobias shared that they offer trainings and outreach each year. Tobias summarized iCanConnect is part of the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program which is approximately 10-20 cases a year for ATP. Tobias also summarized its partnership with Nebraska VR. Chris Gaspari shared in her experience the partnership between Nebraska VR and ATP is fantastic at getting technology to individuals who need it and she has seen great counselor work going above and beyond to meet client's needs.

Angela Fujan shared that in regards to the VR Statistics report the VR system measures have changed but asked what data would be most beneficial for IT to pull for a SRC report. Angela confirmed she will work with IT to provide a report for council to review at the next meeting to provide an overview of common performance measures. No additional feedback was provided by council members.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Employer Services**

Mary Matusiak reported the committee discussed the upcoming job fair at the Lancaster Event Center if the contracts are accepted. They are anticipating 400 students and 200 staff/volunteers April 30<sup>th</sup>. Mary shared the committee reviewed VR history and WIOA to inform the two new committee members.

### **Transition Services**

JD Simmons shared he wanted to commend the great working relationship between the Department of Education and VR which has created some great opportunities and collaboration. Brigid Griffin reported the committee discussed the summer transition programs and they are awaiting some additional reports from the summer programs which will be discussed next meeting. Brigid shared

they will be releasing RFPs soon for next summer's programs. Brigid reported they will be working to improve and increase summer programming for transition counselors. Brigid shared they need to have 40 FPEs to keep in line with funding. Brigid shared a survey was conducted in May for Pre-employment Transition Services with teachers and school staff, reporting a lot of useful information was gathered. Brigid shared the survey will be conducted again next year following some updates and tweaks. Brigid shared an orientation video is being created for pre-employment transition services which is currently in the editing stage and will hopefully be ready for use soon. Brigid shared they are working to update the Pre-employment transition service's release form to add additional questions. Brigid shared PTI is continuing its work implementing the grant.

### **Client Services**

Gayle Hahn reported the committee reviewed the post-employment client satisfaction survey. Gayle shared the survey is currently being revamped. Gayle shared the survey is being conducted by email 90 days post case closing and there is not a lot of assistance a counselor can offer without reopening the case. Gayle reported they working to ensure both positive and negative feedback is being received and being shared with the necessary parties. Gayle shared they will be working with IT to see if comments can be added and shared with office directors and/or counselors. Gayle summarized the most current survey results. Gayle reported for the February meeting they will be investigating if there are any patterns in the responses particularly with the question regarding recommending VR to others. Gayle shared they will continue to evaluate the year end survey report and research any possible trends.

Victoria Rassmussen shared that the earlier discussion regarding on-going training opportunities relating to staff safety today sparked the topic that when important comments are discussed in council meetings that motions should be made so that the minutes can clearly show council discussion. David Scott stated the committee could investigate the training topic further and see how other umbrella agencies are handling similar situations and then bring a motion to the council if deemed necessary. Council and committee discussion determined they will continue to pursue this topic at the February meeting.

### **DIRECTORS REPORT**

Lindy Foley delivered the VR Director's Report. Lindy shared in August they applied for re-allotment and were successfully awarded 1.6million dollars in re-allotment funds. Lindy shared these funds allow VR to begin removing individuals off the waitlist whom are in Priority Group 1. Lindy reported as of September, Priority Group 1 had 1,268 individuals on the waitlist, 425 individuals in Priority Group 2's waitlist, and 285 individuals on the Group 3 waitlist. Per federal law they will begin with Priority Group One in order of their application date. Lindy shared the process will need to be very strategic and very diligent and the plan currently is to begin with the first 100 individuals on the waitlist. Lindy stated they will be continuing with monthly budget meetings. David Scott asked if when reaching out to those individuals on the waitlist if records will be kept if they have found other services and/or no longer require VR services. Lindy stated that yes as counselors are reaching out to waitlist individuals all contact is recorded. Lindy reviewed in December the SRC prioritized retention as part of the order of selection. Lindy reported since January, 38 retention cases have been approved and all but four were for hearing aids. Lindy shared this retention option needs council feedback as there are pros and cons for continuing to keep retention in the state plan. Tobias Orr asked how a driving system could be funded through retention. Lindy and Angela shared that job retention has been defined as the essential functions of the job. Angela Fujan shared the criteria of retention, that the individual is at risk for losing employment, is difficult to define and can be interpreted differently. Mary Matusiak discussed the requirement of employers to define in writing the need for an accommodation or employment

termination would be necessary. Lindy shared if VR truly wants to serve as many people on the waitlist as possible having the outside variable of retention is challenging. David discussed the potential cases and needs of retention accommodations. Lindy stated as an issue of time she will need to convene the executive committee to further discuss and find a consensus to determine a council position on whether to continue or discontinue retention. JD Simmons discussed discontinuing retention could potentially increase wait-list lengths. Victoria Rasmussen shared if retention was unavailable, resource referral would continue to take place. Lindy stated if there are any additional questions and discussion regarding retention to please reach out and the discussion will continue with the executive committee. Lindy also shared that the topic of retention will be discussed with all VR staff during team tour. Lindy stated a strategic planning session is scheduled for next Monday where a facilitated conversation about identifying priorities and goals for the upcoming year will take place. She will report back on that session with the SRC at the next council meeting where discussion can occur on aligning those goals with those of the SRC.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

February 12, 2018 – State Office Building (301 Centennial Mall S. Lincoln, NE)

#### **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 12:20pm.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

- Senator Outreach, February 12<sup>th</sup> 8-9:30am State Capitol Room 1510
- VR staff safety training follow-up
- NYLC budget follow-up
- written reports representative discussions
- State Plan retention priority determination – executive committee